

What is claimed is:

1. An optical switch comprising:
 - a single optical input for accepting an optical signal;
 - an active deflecting element responsive to a control system to deflect said optical signal in a selected one of a plurality of directions, where said deflecting element comprises an electro-optical material and at least one pair of electrodes on opposite sides of said electro-optical material;
 - a common waveguide to accept an optical signal deflected into any one of said plurality of directions; and
 - a plurality of optical outputs, where each of said plurality of optical outputs corresponds to one of said plurality of directions, and where each of said plurality of optical outputs comprises passive optics to accept said optical signal deflected in one of said plurality of directions and propagated through said common waveguide,

where said deflection of said optical signal to said selected one of said plurality of directions provides switching of said optical signal to a corresponding one of said plurality of optical outputs.
2. The optical switch of claim 1, wherein said plurality of optical outputs is three or more optical outputs.
3. The optical switch of claim 1, wherein each electrode of said at least one pair of electrodes is of similar shape, and wherein the optical path of said optical signal passes between each of said at least one pair of electrodes.
4. The optical switch of claim 3, wherein said at least one pair of electrodes is one pair of electrodes.
5. The optical switch of claim 3, wherein said at least one pair of electrodes is two pair of electrodes.
6. The optical switch of claim 1, wherein said electro-optical material is PZT, PLZT, or LN.
7. The optical switch of claim 1, wherein said common waveguide has a face having a plurality of facets each adjacent to one of said plurality of optical outputs and perpendicular to said corresponding one of said plurality of directions.
8. The optical switch of claim 1, wherein said common waveguide propagates said deflected optical signal in a corresponding one of a plurality of waveguide directions, wherein said

common waveguide has a waveguide output adjacent said plurality of optical outputs, and wherein said waveguide output is approximately perpendicular to said plurality of waveguide directions, such that said optical signal is not significantly refracted when exiting said common waveguide.

9. The optical switch of claim 1, wherein each of said passive optics includes a lens and an output waveguide, and wherein said passive optics have an optical axis perpendicular to said waveguide output and the input of said output waveguide.

10. The optical switch of claim 1, wherein said optical switch is a monolithic switch and wherein the material through which the optical path of said optical signal through said single optical input, said common waveguide, and said plurality of optical outputs comprises the electro-optical material of said active deflecting element.

11. The optical switch of claim 1, wherein said optical switch is a hybrid switch and wherein the material through which the optical path of said optical signal through said single optical input, said common waveguide, and said plurality of optical outputs differs from the electro-optical material of said active deflecting element.

12. An optical switch module to switch an optical signal from an input fiber to a selected one of a plurality of output fibers comprising:

a single optical input to accept the optical signal from the input fiber;

optical elements to direct said optical signal to a selected one of a plurality of outputs each optically coupled to one of said plurality of output fibers, where said optical elements comprise

a collimating element to collimate said optical signal,

an active deflecting element to accept said collimated optical signal and deflect said optical signal responsive to a control system in one of a plurality of directions corresponding to a one of said plurality of outputs, where said deflecting element comprises an electro-optical material and at least one pair of electrodes on opposite sides of said electro-optical material,

a common waveguide having a waveguide input to accept said optical signal deflected by said active deflecting element and a waveguide output, and

a focusing element at said plurality of optical outputs comprising passive optics focus said optical signal from said common waveguide into said selected one of said plurality of outputs.

13. The optical switch module of claim 12, wherein said plurality of optical outputs is three or more optical outputs.

14. The optical switch of claim 12, wherein each electrode of said at least one pair of electrodes is of similar shape, and wherein the optical path of said optical signal passes between each of said at least one pair of electrodes.

15. The optical switch of claim 14, wherein said at least one pair of electrodes is one pair of electrodes.

16. The optical switch of claim 14, wherein said at least one pair of electrodes is two pair of electrodes.

17. The optical switch of claim 12, wherein said electro-optical material is PZT, PLZT, or LN.

18. The optical switch of claim 12, wherein said common waveguide has a face having a plurality of facets each adjacent to one of said plurality of optical outputs and perpendicular to said corresponding one of said plurality of directions.

19. The optical switch of claim 12, wherein said common waveguide propagates said deflected optical signal in a corresponding one of a plurality of waveguide directions, wherein said common waveguide has a waveguide output adjacent said plurality of optical outputs, and wherein said waveguide output is approximately perpendicular to said plurality of waveguide directions, such that said optical signal is not significantly refracted when exiting said common waveguide.

20. The optical switch of claim 12, wherein each of said passive optics includes a lens and an output waveguide, and wherein said passive optics have an optical axis perpendicular to said waveguide output and the input of said output waveguide.

21. The optical switch of claim 12, wherein said optical switch is a monolithic switch and wherein the material through which the optical path of said optical signal through said single optical input, said common waveguide, and said plurality of optical outputs comprises the electro-optical material of said active deflecting element.

22. The optical switch of claim 12, wherein said optical switch is a hybrid switch and wherein the material through which the optical path of said optical signal through said single optical input, said common waveguide, and said plurality of optical outputs differs from the electro-optical material of said active deflecting element.